

HANDSOME HARRY

STORIES OF LAND AND SEA.

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at the N. Y. Post Office by Frank Tousey

No. 3.

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 10, 1899.

Price 5 Cents.

HANDSOME HARRY'S CHASE; OR ON THE TRACK OF THE "VULTURE." BY AUTHOR OF "HANDSOME HARRY."



"Leave this ship," cried Harry. "and send your betters!" "Up here, my men!" cried the officer. Harry promptly knocked him down, and as the men clambered up they received blows which sent them back again.

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TRYING TO CAPTURE THE "VULTURE."

BY THE AUTHOR OF HANDSOME HARRY.

CHAPTER I.

A BRUSH WITH A VULTURE.

The hurts received by the men of the Belvedere were mostly of an unimportant character, the Spaniards, in their nervous fear, being entirely taken up with defending themselves. The wounded strangers were in a worse plight, and taxed the resources of the Belvedere to the utmost.

Three of them died before the morning, but the rest passed a quiet night. They seemed to be considerably astonished at the kindness of their foes, even Handsome Harry taking a share of the work, passing from hammock to hammock with medical aid and words of cheer.

While doing this, he did not neglect his other work, and feeling sure that his enemy was still in the island, he kept a boat rowing to and fro about the harbor, to watch for anything that might be moving, and to give timely notice of it.

Two guns were kept shotted ready to sink any boat or craft that might give out signs of activity. But the precaution was needless. The surface of the water remained unruffled, save by the watching boat.

When the morning broke, there were many people moving about the beach, some wringing their hands, and others uttering fierce cries of mourning for their dead. A man in a shovel hat, who was probably a priest, went about ringing a bell, and stop-

ping now and then to exhort eager knots of listeners.

Harry had managed to snatch an hour's sleep, and the others had taken a turn; but none were disposed to enjoy a protracted slumber in the present state of affairs, and the deck of the Belvedere was alive with men.

Ching-Ching was there, quaffing some sort of liquid from a bottle with Samson, both drinking out of a footless wine-glass, the sole relic remaining of the plunder of the previous evening. Neither of them appeared to have suffered in any degree.

About eight o'clock Harry dispatched Tom True ashore, with an intimation that if Captain Brocken was not given up within an hour he would bombard the town.

This made a mighty fluster, and a fat, fussy personage, in whom Ching-Ching recognized his friend of the previous evening, came on board, to deny all knowledge of such a person.

"He is there; your island is small," said Harry; "find him."

"But I assure your most gracious excellency," urged the don, "that no such a man is known to us."

"To you, personally, probably not," said our hero; "but I met him in the house of Don Travio last night. He came there as a known man and an invited guest. You must seek and find him."

The Spaniard turned up his eyes imploringly.

"Our streets," he said, "last night ran with blood. Is it not enough?"

"It was the blood of a horde of dastards," replied Harry, sternly, "who, like wolves, followed upon the track of three men. Their fate was well merited."

"I, too, suffered," said the don. "Standing at my door, peacefully looking at the stars, a number of ruffians fell upon me and threw me violently upon my back. I started up and pursued them single handed, and, turning a corner, overtook about a dozen, and with my own hand slew seven ——"

"Ahem!" said Ching-Ching, and the Spaniard, turning, looked upon the unfortunate young man who had been lame from his birth.

"How do you do, sar?" said Ching-Ching; "berry thick head ob yourn to stand sech a berry hard crack."

"Him got a nigger head," said Samson.

The don glared from one to the other, and knew not what to say. Harry changed the subject for him.

"I stand to my point, only extending the time," he said. "If Captain Brocken is not brought here by noon, I bombard your town."

"We have a fort, sir," said the Spaniard, with a great assumption of dignity.

"I will stand within ten paces of it, all day," said Tom True, "and bet you ten to one that you don't hit me."

"You are wasting time here," said Harry, walking away. "Return to the shore, and let Santa Chardo fail to do my bidding at its peril."

The eyes of the Spaniard showed the slumbering fires which he dared not reveal, and, with a sullen air, he stepped into the boat and departed.

"Watch that fort," said Harry, "and if you see any signs of preparations, fire into it at once."

Two hours passed, and the shore, which had been so lively early in the morning, was deserted. The people in the houses nearest the sea dropped their shutters and closed their doors, in anticipation of the coming storm.

There were a few fishing-boats just in the line of fire, but no man sought to move them,

and a number of nets were left drying on the beach.

Another hour, and then a number of black specks were seen moving up a hill. The people had deserted the town, and were flying beyond the range of the guns.

"They believe I shall keep my word," said our hero, grimly, "and I will not disappoint them."

He turned toward the after part of his vessel, walking toward the helm, and, as he did so, a sight met his gaze which sent his blood coursing through his veins.

It was a ship stealing out from behind a jutting point of land about three miles away. She had all sails set, and was going well before a steady breeze.

"Staines!" he cried. "Come here. What craft is that?"

Ira looked a moment, and replied:

"The Vulture."

"Weigh anchor here!" cried Harry, "and fling out every stitch of canvas. Tom, take the helm yourself. The breeze is as good for us as for him, and if he can sail better than the Belvedere, he has the best craft on the wide seas."

With magical rapidity, sail after sail fell out of its folds, the Belvedere swung round, and the anchor being weighed, she glided out of the harbor with the grace and ease of a swan.

Once outside, the breeze fairly caught, and, with her shrouds making music, she sped fast in pursuit.

The Vulture had by this time got a start of three miles and a half, and the chase being a stern one, it threatened to be long. It was a clear day, with the sun like a ball of molten brass in the sky, and the sea one mass of glittering light.

"There is enough daylight, and to spare," said Harry.

"A good eight hours," returned Tom.

"I have him now," cried Harry, exultingly; "at last, at last!"

"Many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip," muttered Ira.

"True," said Tom; "but the pitcher goes once too often to the well, and is broken at last."

"You could not break a pitcher more

worthy of destruction," said Ira, pointing to the Vulture. "I am beginning to wonder how I ever lived on board a day. But it is only the fancy of the passing moment. I have no heart—it was turned to stone ages ago."

In another part of the craft different anticipations were being exchanged. Samson told Ching-Ching that more fighting was expected, and that worthy at once affected the utmost dismay.

"Oh! ki—ki," he said; "where shall I hide my lilly head?"

"Wot for?" demanded old Cutten, who was preparing lint for the wounded.

"Me allers feel so berry bad," moaned Ching-Ching, sitting down and fanning himself like one uncommonly faint. "Oh, Sammy; let me lean upon your lilly shoulder."

Samson gave him the required support, and, while the pair were in this interesting position, Bill Grunt came up.

"Wot's the game now?" he asked, in dire exasperation.

"He's tuk ill," replied old Cutten, "becos he's afeared there will be more fightin'."

"Better chuck him overboard with a hen-coop," said Bill Grunt.

"Oh, don't bear malish against an ole friend," murmured Ching-Ching. "Just afore de battle, moder, I'm tinkin' ob my lilly broder."

"Who's he?" demanded Bill.

"Everybody," replied Ching-Ching—"every man my lilly broder—you my broder."

"I'm blest if I am," growled the old boat-swain.

"Oh, yes, you are," insisted Ching-Ching; "when de battle comin' I feel bad; den I tink I die and leeb eberybody. I so sorry dat I do wrong ting—specially to lubly ole Cutten, and handsome Mr. William Grunt, sqarrer."

"Oh, dash it now, none of your soft soap. You are like the ole un when he was sick—the devil a saint would be; but when the devil got well, the devil a saint was he."

"Massa Grunt know eberyting," murmured Ching-Ching—"he so berry clever; for all dat Massa Tom True say dat he got

jaw like a jackass, and head thicker dan de breech ob a forty-pound gun."

"Who said that?" asked Bill.

"Massa Tom," returned Ching-Ching; "he confide in me and say dat. He confide in Sammy, too."

Samson did not remember any such confidence being reposed in him, but knowing that he possessed a defective memory, he forebore to contradict. Ching-Ching went on:

"I feel a sort of presentiment dat de fust shot from dat ship knock my head orf," he said; "and I like to make my will."

"What ha' you got to leave?" asked old Cutten.

"You'll see," said Ching-Ching. "Sammy, can you write?"

"A lilly bit, Chingy."

"Den feel up my back, and jist under my collar you will find a sort ob pocket; put your hand dere and bring out pocket-book."

The pocket seemed to be a very capacious one, for Samson got his arm down beyond the elbow and did a considerable amount of groping before he discovered and brought forth a small memorandum-book, very crumpled and soiled—the sort of thing that one gets for about twopence a dozen. Attached to this valuable article, by a piece of string, was the stump of a lead-pencil about an inch and a half long.

"Now, Sammy," said Ching-Ching, "write."

Samson wetted the point of the pencil copiously, and, placing the memorandum-book upon the deck, squared himself to the work, and declared that he was ready.

"First," said Ching-Ching, "put down my half-share in de White Eagle, tea drader between Pekin and Liv'pool—dat I leave to you, Sammy."

"T'ank you," replied Samson, as he appended his name to the half of the trader; "what next?"

"A public-house an' fishing smack at Portsmouth," said Ching-Ching; "my farder bought 'em bof wid de hope of retiring from de opium trade; but it never come orf. Dat suit you, Massa Grunt?"

"Reyther," replied Bill. "I'd like to have

a public and boat o' my own, if you ain't gammoning."

The look Ching-Ching turned upon him, a look of mingled suffering and grief, quite disarmed him, and he asked pardon.

"Dere's a green-grocer's shop next door," continued Ching-Ching; "dat I leave to —. But I so berry faint."

"Have a drop o' water," suggested old Cutten.

"T'ank you; but what dat bottle in your pocket?"

"It's my larst night's grog," said Cutten; "I've saved it for to-day."

"Jest let me wet my lips with it," asked Ching-Ching.

Old Cutten incautiously complied with this modest request.

Ching-Ching took the bottle—a small affair, once devoted to physic—and tilted half the contents down his throat.

"Have a lilly drop, Sammy?" he said, and the negro, with a grin, disposed of the rest.

"Well, I'm dashed," began old Cutten.

"Dat green-grocer's shop," interposed Ching-Ching, "I leaf to Mr. Ole Cutten, for his brudderly love; all de rest ob my property I leaf to de destitoot Chineemen in foreign lands."

"What am de rest ob your property?" asked Samson.

"My uncle in Pekin will gib you de list," replied Ching-Ching; "he is my crustee. T'ank you, Sammy; now I tink I take a lilly walk."

Samson helped him up, and the pair moved away.

"I say," said old Cutten, "it won't be a bad thing, if he ain't sold us."

"Oh, it's right enough!" replied Bill; "those Chineee chaps make a pot o' money one way and the other, and they lives on rice."

"So they do; why—where—what the deuce—"

"What's the matter, Cutten?"

"I've lost my knife. I had it here a moment ago."

"Ain't it under them rags?"

"No, it ain't; but I know where it is; that darned Chineee!"

"At him, Cutten!"

"Stand to your guns there!" cried Harry, in stentorian tones, "and load on the star-board side with grape and canister!"

They had now drawn within a mile of the Vulture, having overhauled her at every stride. They could see the deck alive with men, and through his glass Harry could make out the figure of Captain Brocken standing at the stern.

"All is well," he said, "at last—at last!"

"Look aft," said Ira Staines.

Harry looked, and saw a great bank of cloud arising. It had a peculiarly light and fleecy appearance.

"Sea-fog," said Ira; "common enough in these parts."

"How long will it be in overtaking us?"

"Depends upon the breeze—may be here in half an hour, or may not come at all."

"Hold off! hold off!" cried Harry, extending his arms, and appealing to it as if it were a thing of life. "Oh, thwart not my hope! I have toiled and striven for this hour. Times and oft I have had him within my grasp and he has eluded me. I have borne much; let me not suffer more!"

"I think we are within shot, sir," said Bill Grunt.

"Fire then!" replied Harry; "and aim at his rigging. When that is cut to pieces he is at our mercy."

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WITHIN REACH.

Bill Grunt set the bow gun himself, and fired. The grape-shot spread with excellent aim, but with no great effect. Holes were torn in the sails, but no material damage done to the rigging.

"Everything favors him," muttered Harry; "he bears a charmed life. Load her again, and I will fire."

The gun was got ready, and Harry was about to set it, when Tom came up, and said that one of the wounded men below was dying, and wanted to speak to him.

Harry could not disobey such an injunction, and, hurrying down, he found himself beside the sick man.

He had nothing particular to request—at least, nothing which concerns our story. He wished to express his gratitude, and to leave a locket and a handful of gold for his wife and children.

"They live in the white house by the sea," he said. "A small place enough, but I was happy there, until the cursed gambling thirst came upon me. Will you give that to my Ida?"

"All this, and more, if I go that way," said Harry.

"Senor," returned the dying man, "let me kiss your hand."

Harry gave it, and the Spaniard, having touched it lightly and tenderly with his lips, expired.

"All was going well with him until the last few minutes," said the man in attendance, "and then a sudden change came."

"What was the cause of it?"

"I do not know, sir."

The noise of a gun recalled our hero to the deck, where he found that the second aim had done better duty than the first, and tumbled a lot of the Vulture's rigging upon her stern. A number of the pirates clambered up, and proceeded to cut it away.

"I can't make this fellow out," said Tom True, who had been taking a survey of the Vulture; "he has not even his deck cleared."

"Not in a fighting humor, perhaps, sir," suggested Bill Grunt.

"You do not know him," said Ira Staines. "This Captain Brocken is never in a peaceful one."

"Is he so blood-thirsty?" asked Toni.

"He is like a man mad for the life of others," returned Ira. "He is like a tiger, with an insatiable appetite—ever killing, ever suffering remorse, yet ever adding to the mountain of guilt upon his head."

"A strange compound."

"The strangest I ever knew. I used to think that he sought to bury one deed beneath another."

"Was he never anything else but the blood-thirsty pirate?"

"Sometimes I have seen him a little softened, but he never allowed remorse to have its swing. Dark deeds were his drink, and

in them he seemed to drown the memory of the past."

"What is the meaning of his silence?" asked Handsome Harry, coming up. "I cannot fire upon a cur who will not fight."

"He is no cur," said Ira; "some other motive than fear guides him."

"Give me the speaking trumpet."

It was handed to Harry, and through it he called upon Captain Brocken to surrender. In a few moments came the answer:

"Go your way, and let me go mine, in Heaven's name."

"Dastard! I call upon you to surrender," cried Harry.

"And if I do," asked the pirate, "what will be my fate?"

"You will be hanged at the yard-arm, and your men put ashore on the nearest coast," cried Harry.

"Rash boy," returned the pirate, "you know not the deed you would do. Go your way."

"Oh, scoundrel! have you not wronged me and mine?"

"Yes, I have," cried the pirate—the ships had now drifted nearer, and their voices could be heard without the aid of the trumpets—"and if the giving up of my life would recall the past, I would lay it down now."

"Your life, by every law, is forfeited," cried Harry.

"True," said Captain Brocken; "but it is not fitting that you should be my executioner."

"Why not?"

"I cannot—dare not tell you. Go your way in peace."

"This is the equivocation of a coward," said Harry, scornfully. "Lower your vile flag."

"'Tis done," said the pirate, waving his hand, and the dark bunting, with its ghastly emblems, came tumbling down; "do with me what you will."

"Lower the boats," cried Harry. "Tom, you take charge of the long boat; Staines, you take the cutter; I will take the pinnace."

Into this he got with about a dozen men—not much to face some hundreds of swarthy foes whose yielding might be false, and but the prelude to a terrible defence—but Harry

and fear were strangers, and he gave the word to push off.

Just as the men bent to their oars, two figures came tumbling over the side—they were Samson and Ching-Ching.

"Come in time," said Samson.

"You have almost deserted me, Samson," returned Harry, with a smile. "You are so much taken up with your friends."

"Not when der's danger about, sar," said Samson, proudly.

"No, Samson. I understand you. Pull strong and steady, men. You have your backs to the foes now, but you shall show them your faces ere long."

The Vulture drew rapidly nearer. Everything above board stood out clearly—the broken rigging, the swarthy crew, and the captain standing to the stern with his arms folded.

Thus for one moment, and the next the fog came tumbling down, wrapping sea, sky, ships, and boats in the folds of an impenetrable veil.

The change was so sudden and so startling that the men rowing paused in their work, and uttered a shout. It was answered by the men of the Belvedere, but the pirates were as still as the grave.

"Foiled!" cried Harry; and he bowed his head in anguish.

"You have been spared a great crime," cried the voice of Captain Brocken.

The mist was shaken for an instant by his sonorous voice, then it settled again, and he was heard no more.

Harry sat motionless, like one bereft of all hope. The men rested on their oars, waiting for the word to return. It was not given until another shout from the Belvedere arrived.

"Return, my men," he said, "and pull easily."

They could hear, but not see him, so dense was the mist, and the stroke oar had to count one—two—three—and so on, as a guide to the movements of those behind him.

"Pinnacle ahoy," cried Bill Grunt.

"Here," answered Harry. "Where is Mr. True?"

"Aboard, sir."

"And Mr. Staines?"

"Aboard, sir."

"Drop the tackle, Grunt. Now we touch her. Thank you."

The men clambered up, and Harry was the last to leave the boat. On deck he could see as little as before, but he heard the voice of Tom True near him.

"Any orders, sir?"

"No," was the bitter reply. "The wind has lulled, and the fog has settled upon us. We must drift on at the mercy of the current. Keep your ears open for the slightest sound."

He groped his way to the companion, and went below. Tom felt out a road to the wheel, and stood by the man ready for any emergency, and others did certain things which will appear in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III.

VERY, VERY MUCH IN A FOG.

There is nothing more bewildering than a fog. Ordinary darkness is daylight to it. Londoners are pretty well acquainted with the advantages of the pea-soup mist which they inherit by right of birth, and manufacturing towns, such as Manchester, have a fair idea of fogs in general.

But neither the Londoner nor the Manchester man has any idea of the denseness of a sea-fog in some latitudes. It has the qualities—paradoxical as it may seem—of being luminous, yet opaque, and the general effect upon those enveloped in it is like that one experiences when we shut our eyes and turn our eyeballs to the sun.

It was particularly bewildering to Bill Grunt, who, with all his experience, had seen nothing like it, and he wandered about like a teetotum on the loose, until good fortune ran him against old Cutten, who had been brought to a stand-still by getting his wooden leg into one of the scupper holes.

Having relieved his friend, Bill proceeded to discuss the situation.

"Here's a nice go, Cutten," he said.

"Awful," replied Cutten; "reg'lar fixed up. How long'll this last—an hour or two?"

"A day or two, you mean," returned Grunt, savagely; "why there ain't a breath of wind. The fog came down like a 'stinguisher.'"

"Then there's to be no fighting?"

"No."

"And we've lost the pirate?"

"Unless we run bang agin him, and that ain't likely," replied Bill.

A short pause ensued, followed with a silence broken only by the muffled words exchanged by the seamen scattered about the deck. Cutten was the first to speak.

"I'm very hungry, Bill," he said.

"So am I," replied Bill; "are you fond of sassidge?"

"Rather, it goes afore all meat," was the reply, and Cutten smacked his lips.

"I've got a sassidge," continued Grunt—"a germaner—about two pounds on it—in my locker; and there's half a loaf o' soft tommy which I tuk from the capen's table, and I think I've got a little drop o' the creetur, which I found in the bottom of the last cask."

"Oh! Bill, you are a friend, indeed."

"I stands by my friends," said Bill, complacently. "Now we are about midship, and I think I can grope my way down and back. Don't you move, but wait here for me; and don't say a word to a soul. We'll have a reg'lar blow-out—a feast in the fog, Cutten!"

"I'm down on that sassidge," was all Cutten could reply; and Bill Grunt crept away.

He was gone quite a quarter of an hour, and old Cutten endured agonies of apprehension. He even suspected his friend, and wondered if he had not repented of his generosity, and fallen foul of the delicacy alone.

But all his apprehensions were at length dispelled by the return of Bill Grunt, who, it seemed, had at first gone upon the wrong tack, and nearly knocked his eye out against the rammer of a gun, which, as he said, "Some cussed lubber had left sticking up to a hangle."

Convinced of his being on the wrong road, he had returned, and come with tolerable ease to the spot where he had left his hungry friend.

"Now, Cutten," he said, "take a seat, and

let me put the grub atwixt us. Hallo! where are you shovin' your wooden leg to?"

"Ax your pardon," returned Cutten; "but I thought you were the other way."

"Another inch," growled Grunt, "and you would have bunged the other eye up. Now, then, there's the sassidge nearest me, and there's the tommy nearest you, and a little rum atwixt. I'll divide the prog fust, and then we'll go at the grog. There's your half of sassidge."

"Where?"

"Why, you took it."

"No, I didn't," replied Cutten. "I ain't so much as felt it."

"Then it must have dropped on the deck. Ketch hold of your tommy."

"Where is it?"

"I'll swear you took that," snarled Bill.

"Don't play any pranks on a true friend," said Cutten, in trembling tones. "Fair play, Bill."

"Fair play—it is. Why, why where the deuce——"

"What's the matter, Bill?"

"My tommy and sassidge is gone."

"Perhaps you never had none," said old Cutten, sarcastically. "It's a werry good joke, Bill, but it ain't manly."

"Perhaps you'll say that I ain't got no rum," growled Bill, groping about, and groping in vain, for there was no bottle to be found.

"Cutten," he continued, in the deep tone of one whose heart was touched, "be a man, and don't play tricks in a fog."

Old Cutten sniffed contemptuously, but uttered not a word.

"When I," continued Bill Grunt, "in a sperrit of ginerosity, brought hout that tommy and sassidge I hacted noble."

"Werry noble," said Cutten; "oh, yes, werry noble."

"You seems to have your doubts, Hed-dard?" said Bill Grunt.

"Whatsomever I might have had, I ain't got no sassidge," replied Cutten, who had been addressed by Bill Grunt, in his agony, by his Christian name of Edward.

"You might have been contented with your own," continued the bo'sen, ignoring his friend's denial; "you had half a sassidge."

"I hadn't."

"It must ha' weighed nigh a pound, without reckoning the tommy."

"I swear I hain't touched it," said Cutten, goaded nearly to madness by hunger and false accusations.

"Hungry you may be," pursued Bill Grunt, "but you needn't be such a stuffer. Then there's the 'ole of the rum."

"Which I ain't put my lips to—and you never had. Bill, you've not been manly; you've deceived me."

"I had all, I say," insisted Grunt, feeling about to make sure, "and it's all gone."

"I haven't touched it."

"Which you're a liar!" said Bill Grunt, turning up his cuffs, "and if you don't regorge some of it, I'll have the life out of you!"

Old Cutten was bewildered.

Bill Grunt was evidently earnest and sincere. But where were the food and liquor?

A happy thought coursed through the brain of "Heddard."

"He swallowed the rum hasty," he murmured, "and it's got into his 'ed."

"Now then," growled Bill, "where's my sassidge?"

"I'll creep orf quietly," thought Cutten; "he'll be better bye-and-bye. Rum and pig don't mix well."

"It'll be all the wuss for you," growled Bill; "better give it up, afore I'm in a bustin' rage."

Mr. Edward Cutten got up softly and made preparations to move away. Then he remembered his wooden leg.

"It must be heer'd," he thought, "onless I wrop a handkercher round the bottom."

He untwisted his handkerchief from his neck, and stooped down. The ship gave a gentle lurch, and shot him into the arms of Bill Grunt, who was feeling about.

"Now, Heddard," growled Bill, "where's my wittles?"

"Jest hear me, Bill—I ain't touched it."

"Shell out."

"I've got nothing to shell out."

"We'll see about that."

Then commenced an interesting struggle in the fog, which attracted the attention of the sailors in every direction.

"Pirates aboard!" cried one.

"At 'em, lads!" cried another.

Half a dozen tars rushed blindly in the direction of the commotion, and it would have been hard with the furious friends if the fog had not suddenly lifted and revealed them dimly.

Bill had got his beloved "Heddard" down, and was hammering him heavily. The fog lifted a little more, and the deck could be seen from stem to stern.

What remarkable sight is this which salutes the eyes of the furious boatswain? Can it be true?

There, by the binnacle, sit his two arch enemies actively engaged in the consumption of an enormous sausage and some white bread. Ching-Ching holds a rum-bottle aloft, and his eyes are hazy. Samson is quite oily with joy.

With a roar like that of an angry bull, Bill Grunt rushed forward, but ere he was half across the deck, the treacherous fog descended again, and all was cloud and mist.

"I'm darned," muttered Bill, "if that Ching-Ching chap ain't up to everything. Heddard, where are you?"

"Here," answered Heddard, curtly.

"I ax your pardon, mate. I've wronged you."

"Fine words can't butter no parsnips," returned Cutten, "and they won't take the color out o' my black eye."

"Heddard, I've axed your pardon; be a man."

Cutten was still very sore—but it was a good thing to have a boatswain for a friend; so he bottled his wrath and extended his hand.

"Bill," he said, "here's my fist."

Bill stepped forward and received it under his chin. Cutten dropped it a little lower, and peace was made.

"Chingy," whispered Samson.

"Yes, ole boy."

"Berry good sassidge."

"Berry."

"Stunnin' white tommy."

"Crummy."

"And de rum most meller."

"Glad you like it, Sammy."

"You berry cleber chap, Chingy."

"All my family berry cleber," returned Ching-Ching. "My farder, whom I mention to you once or twice, was de cleberest man in all Pekin. He got de medil for it—big medil; so big dat he hab two men to carry it 'bout. Uncle cleber too, but dey hang him."

"Why?" asked Samson.

"He berry cleber—so cleber dat he borrow de mandarin's gold snuff-box; but he not cleber enough to put it back again. Dey find him out, so dey hang him. Such a lot ob people come to de funeral. Ah! dat a berry solum right."

"De funeral, Chingy?"

"Yes, ole boy—de funeral. Dey hang my uncle ober a well, and, when him quite dead, dey cut de rope. Down drop my cleber uncle, and dey put the lid on. Den de mandarin, who lost his snuff-box; dance a jig around it, and make the lilly boys scramble for lolliplops. I was a lilly boy then, and got a blue sugar elephant widout de trunk. I neber forgit that sad and solum day. Sammy, I jes' goin' to hab a lilly nap; wake me when de fog rises."

And Ching-Ching, overpowered by sausage, rum, and the touching memories of the past, lay down and speedily fell asleep.

CHAPTER IV. 30

A CONVIVIAL MEETING.

"I say, Chingy," said Samson, addressing his bosom friend, "what am a convival meetin'?"

Ching-Ching fanned himself vigorously for a few moments, opened and shut his umbrella, and then replied:

"A convival meetin', Sammy," he said, "is whar everybody get berry drunk, and knock each oder 'bout frightful."

"Oh! dat a convival meetin', Chingy?"

"Yes, ole boy—we hab a lot ob dem in Pekin. My farder gib one wunce, and him invite all him relatives and frends, concludin' my uncle; wid him he not been frends for years, owin' to a lilly family bobbery, whar all de genlymen get black eyes, and all de ladies lose dere back hair,"

"A general fight," suggested Samson.

"Oncommon general," replied Ching-Ching. "De only party as couldn't join us was my grandfarder, who lost bof him legs in de sugar-mill, and he sat in de corner and chuck foot-stools 'bout. Wal, Sammy, my farder member dat convival meetin', so he put a posecrip at de bottom de nex' time, which say, 'Don't bring de ladies, and say nuffin.'"

"He berry wise man."

"Berry," returned Ching-Ching. "So de night come for de convival meetin', and all de genlymen come sneakin' in one by one, my uncle larst, acause he had to dodge my aunt, who was follerin' all 'bout Pekin. 'But I hab done her at larst,' he ses, and den he rub him hands. My farder put two bottles ob rum, one ob gin, and two ob whisky on de table. 'Genlymen,' ses my farder, 'let us be convival.' So dey fill dere glasses, and jist goin' to drink, when de door open, and all de ladies, led by my aunt, walk in."

"Dat was okkard," said Sammy.

"My farder tell me dat it de mose convival evening ob him life," said Ching-Ching, "for he de only man dat got out ob de room wid him pigtail."

Samson showed a deal of white about the eyes, as if he rather enjoyed the confusion of the convivial party. Ching-Ching shook his head mournfully and added a moral—

"If eber you get de nupternal knot tied, Sammy," he said, "nebbber deceive de partner ob your joys. But why you ax me 'bout convival party?"

"I hear Massa Grunt talk 'bout habin' one wid ole Cutten.

"Whar?"

"In de hold," said Samson. "He say to ole Cutten, 'You some down de fore hatch-way dis evenin', and you find me dere wid bacca and grog; we make quite a convival party ob it,' he ses."

"Samson," said Ching-Ching, "what are you goin' to do dis afternoon?"

"Me attend on Massa Harry. Why?"

"Oh! nebbber mind," replied Ching-Ching, carelessly; "it no matter."

Nothing more was said just then, and, Samson being summoned to Harry's presence, Ching-Ching walked forward with his

umbrella up, in a careless, indifferent way, like a gentleman taking the air.

The fore hatch was off, and our friend took up a position near it, humming an air of rather doubtful melody. In a minute or so Bill Grunt came struggling up quite purple in the face.

"Berry nice day, Massa Grunt," said Ching-Ching.

The old boatswain looked at him with a very doubtful eye, but Ching-Ching, with a face of sweet simplicity, was watching the movements of a sea-gull.

"The day is fine enough for me," said Bill.

"You a berry contented man," returned Ching-Ching; "berry much more so dan some men. Been down de hold, Massa Grunt?"

"Yes; and hard work it is, for the steps is broke away."

"How you git down den?"

"With a rope; and I don't mean to trust myself down there again. I shall get my precious neck broke."

"When dat happen," said the veracious Chinaman, "I fold up dis umbrella, lay on my back and die—die right away."

"He's a mighty iley cove," growled old Bill, as he walked away, "but I don't think he's bowled me out."

The afternoon was pretty well advanced when the boatswain sought out old Cutten, and bade him come to the convivial meeting. The inducements were lots of rum and unlimited tobacco.

"The hold is nice and cool," he said, "and we can have our swig-out without having that cussed nigger, and still more cussed Chinaman joining us. Come on, mate, I've left the hatchment off all day, to sweeten the place."

"You are a friend, indeed," murmured old Cutten, his eyes brimful of tears.

They went on deck together, and sauntered in a casual manner, until they came to the hatchway. Halting close to it, Bill Grunt, with the base intent to deceive all standing near, said, in a loud voice:

"Cutten, I want you to come down and help me to right the hold."

"Aye, aye, sir," replied Cutten, cunningly aiding and abetting the deception.

"Mind, there's only a rope."

Cutten was still a bit of a sailor, and he slid down with wonderful activity. The rope was a double one, run through a staple. When Bill Grunt joined him, he pulled the rope out, and thereby cut off all communication from above.

"What's that for?" asked old Cutten.

"We sha'n't be interfered with," replied Bill; "and when we want to go up we've only to holler, and swear it was a haccident. Now the rum and bacca is under this ere empty tub. Why—I—where is it?"

"There's no rum and no bacca there," said Cutten.

"This is the tub," growled Bill, with a savage gleam in his eye, "and somebody's been down here. Hullo! who's there?"

"Sounded like rats," said Cutten.

"Rats be busted!" cried Bill Grunt, rushing furiously forward. "Come out, you darned Chinaman. I'll have the life of ye now."

"Ki-ki," screamed Ching-Ching, in apparent terror, as he ran round the hold with the activity of a cat. "Ko-ko, oh! kimpany-kimpany-kum. Massa Grunt, hab mercy on me; I fall down de hold and nearly break my neck; now you want to kill me."

"Where's my bacca and rum?" shouted Bill. "Oh, you tallow-faced Chineese! I'll settle you now."

The chase was very exciting, as the hold was strewn over with tubs and boxes. Ching-Ching made light of these, avoiding every obstacle with incredible activity. Bill Grunt, not quite so active, knocked his knees and shins about terribly.

"Hi, there he is; stop him," cried Bill, who still carried the rope which had afforded him the means of descent in his hand. "Stop him, can't you?"

Cutten spread out his arms, but Ching-Ching, butting at him like a bull, sent him upon his back. Then the Chinaman performed a gymnastic feat which remained for many a day in the memory of the spectators. Leaping up, he caught hold of the open hatchway and swung himself to and fro twice. Bill Grunt had just time to deal him two smart cuts with the rope, and then

he jerked himself up upon the deck and disappeared.

"Well, I'm blarmed!" said Bill Grunt.

"He's gone," said Cutten.

"So is our bacca and rum," grunted old Bill, "and we had better go, too."

"You had better lay this afore the cap'en, Bill."

"Can't, Cutten; for drinking and smoking in this way ain't 'gitermate."

They shouted for aid, and a sailor came and repaired the rope. Attaining the deck, they sought out Ching-Ching, but he was not to be found; nor, indeed, was he discovered all that night. And Samson was absent, too. On the morrow both appeared upon deck, and Ching-Ching looked very fishy about the eyes.

"Fine mornin', Massa Grunt," he said; "jes de sort o' mornin' to freshen a man up arter de conwival meetin'."

Bill Grunt made no reply, but he mentally registered a vow to have a deep and fearful vengeance for the wrongs he was daily enduring.

CHAPTER V.

"THE BELVEDERE FIGHTS, BUT NEVER SURRENDERS."

It was indeed a fine morning; the fog which had lasted so long had disappeared during the night, as if by magic.

The Belvedere was surrounded by a circle of sea, and nothing more.

In vain Handsome Harry and his officers swept the sea with their glasses; not even a seagull broke the even monotony of the water. Above, one unbroken arch of blue. Below, one unbroken plain of glittering light.

Our hero's thoughts were too bitter to find vent in words—ever so near his prize and ever losing it. Hope had been strong within him, but it was fading now.

"Perhaps it is not to be," he thought; "if so, what power have I to thwart the High Will—I, a poor worm of a man, with naught that I can really call my own."

"What course now?" asked Tom True.

"Back to Fertilago," replied Harry; "I must see Don Salvo. I leave you in charge, unless something unusual occurs—then call me."

Moody and distraught, he sought his cabin, and sat there for an hour or more, mechanically examining and arranging the arms scattered about. At the expiration of that time Tom put his head inside the door.

"Sail in sight," he said.

"What is it like?" asked Harry.

"Something ugly," returned Tom. "Looks like a British man-of-wars-man. She has signaled us to stand by."

"Have you answered?"

"I ran up the Union Jack and your flag," replied Tom.

"And then?"

"They still kept their stand-by flag flying, and—there is the signal gun."

"I will join you in a moment. Have the decks cleared."

"He means to fight that chap, if need be," muttered Tom. "Whew! What next? But it's all fish that comes to my net."

When Harry joined his men on deck he found them scattered about in little anxious groups. About three miles in the Belvedere's course was a frigate coming up gayly. It was no use ignoring the power of such a craft. A struggle between it and the Belvedere would be like a fight between a man and a child.

"She carries no colors at present," said Harry.

"No, but there they go. Brazilian, by jingo! She's English built, but not English manned."

"We need not fear him," said Harry, contemptuously. "I had some thought of attempting to show him our heels; but keep on our course and prepare for action."

"We shall have plenty of time for action directly," said Tom. "If I mistake not, we shall soon have a calm."

The breeze was already dying. The gusts grew feebler each moment, and within twenty minutes of the time Tom spoke the sails flapped idly and then fell still. The Union Jack, and the white flag with the red heart on it—motto, "I come"—wound about

the masthead and mingled their colors together.

The frigate also stopped on her way, with her bows pointing toward the Belvedere. The sea was too deep to drop anchor, and she only drifted before the current.

"She cannot do much harm while this lasts," said Ira. "If the calm only lasts till night, and then comes a breeze, why, we can give them the slip."

"Boats lowering, sir!" cried out Bill Grunt.

Two were lowered, but one only came on. It contained one officer and about twenty men. They pulled alongside, as if despising the Belvedere, and the officer came upon deck.

He was a little-built half-blood, with a small mustache—"two-penny paint brushes," Tom called them—which he twirled satirically. He spoke English.

"What's the name of this—a—boat?" he asked.

"The Belvedere."

"What country?"

"Great Britain."

"Permit me to doubt it," said the officer.

Harry turned a wrathful face upon him.

"Leave this ship," he cried, "and send your betters!"

"Up here, my men!" cried the officer.

Tom knocked him down promptly, and as the men clambered up they received blows which sent them back again.

"You had better keep away," said Ira, leaning over.

The answer was a pistol shot, which blew his hat off.

Ira seized a cold shot and dashed it through the bottom of the boat.

The men were all scattered about in the water, shrieking for help. Harry gave orders to throw them some hen-coops and spars, but not to take any on board.

"There is another boat coming," he said; "let it pick them up."

But in case any of the men should sink, he kept his eyes upon their movements. As far as he could see, they were all safe.

"How many men had you?" he asked.

"Twenty," replied the officer.

"Are they all there?"

"Pshaw! Why should I trouble myself about the men?"

"Then I must," said Harry.

He counted them over—twenty in all. Then he turned to the officer and said:

"Your men are all right, but they seem to be in a little confusion. They want their officer with them. Which will you have—a plank or a hencoop?"

"Will you dare?" demanded the Brazilian.

"Yes," replied Harry, "I will. Make your choice."

"You will suffer for this when this miserable boat surrenders," hissed the officer.

"The Belvedere will fight, but never surrender," answered our hero. "You have not yet made your choice."

The Brazilian saw that he was quite serious, and, pointing to the hencoop, bowed.

"Inside or out?" asked Tom.

The swarthy face of the Brazilian was literally puffed out with rage, but the reply he would have given he dared not venture.

The hencoop was tossed overboard, and the officer leapt after it. Before he could reach it, one of his own men deserted a rather fragile piece of timber and made for the coop.

"Back!" cried the officer.

"Can't swim far, sir."

"Back, I say," shouted the officer.

"Room enough for two chickens there," said Tom; "let his roost."

The man reached it first; but the officer, on arriving, bade him begone.

"I shall drown if I do, sir," replied the man, piteously.

The Brazilian drew a pistol from his breast—but it was useless; the water had damaged the charge. He aimed a blow at the man with the butt of it; the man ducked, seized his wrist, wrenched away the weapon and dealt the officer a blow on the head with it.

He lost his hold of the coop and sank.

The man seemed to be touched with remorse, and plunged after him. In a few seconds he rose, bearing the body of the insensible officer.

The coop had drifted away a little, and his efforts to reach it seemed to be too

feeble. Harry ordered a rope to be tossed to him.

Bill Grunt heaved one overboard well within the man's reach, and as he grasped it, Bill, with the aid of Ching-Ching, hauled them in.

Still holding his officer, he was drawn on board, and then he fell exhausted upon the deck.

"You are a brave man," said Harry. "What is your name?"

"Sam Rock."

"English?"

"Scotch parents—born in Brazil. Is he dead?"

The officer replied himself by opening his eyes and mouth and gasping terribly. He seemed, as he undoubtedly was, considerably astonished to find himself again on board the Belvedere.

"I suppose I owe my life to you," he said to Harry, scowling.

"Indeed, no; to that brave fellow there."

"He! Why, it was his hand that struck me down."

"And his saved you."

"But it will not save himself," said the officer; "it is death in our navy to strike a superior."

"Surely you would not press for punishment," said Harry.

"I am the servant of the State, and must obey its laws," was the cold reply.

Our hero turned away in disgust and addressed Sam Rock.

"You had better remain with me," he said; "it will not be safe for you to return."

"Thank you, sir," replied the man, touching his forelock; "just the thing I was hoping for in my heart."

The foregoing incidents had been watched from the deck of the frigate with considerable interest, and the second boat came up in a very chary manner, as if doubtful of the reception it would get.

"You can pick up your men," cried Harry through his trumpet, "and then return. But perhaps you, sir, would like to go with them."

"Unless you wish to detain me prisoner," was the officer's reply.

"I assure you," returned Harry, coldly, "that I have no desire to have you on board the Belvedere either as friend or foe."

The officer winced, but said nothing; and the boat being hailed, he stepped into it. All the men having been picked up, they returned to the frigate.

"Now, if they get hold of us," said Ira, "they will make us whistle."

"They will make a run for it," returned Tom; "they are preparing the boats."

Such was the case. Eight boats were lowered over the side, each capable of bearing at least thirty men, and five of them carried bow-swivel guns—heavy odds for the Belvedere; but Harry cared little for such an attack.

"Out with the boarding nettings," he cried.

"And blaze away at those cockle-shells," added Tom, in a low tone.

"I will warn them first," said Harry.

The boats now divided—spread out with great gaps between, and, by the way they were steered, it was evident that they meant to assault the Belvedere on every side.

"Eight boats," said Harry, "will require eight parties of defence."

And into eight parties he divided his men, giving the commanding part of the business to Tom, Ira, Bill Grunt and four of his best men; one party—the smallest—he commanded in person; but, as we know, he was a host in himself, and he had for his supporters Samson and Ching-Ching.

The latter named gentleman, although he was armed to the teeth, still kept his umbrella up, and fanned himself with a coolness which made his late trepidation, during which he made and signed that important document, his will, only the more remarkable. Samson looked upon fighting as fun, and wore upon his face a broad grin.

"De Brazilians berry fond ob slaves," he said; "give 'em goss, Chingy."

Ching-Ching closed his umbrella, stowed away his fan, and loosening his cutlass in its sheath, replied: "Sammy, I gib you de same answer dat de man gittin' married gib de parson when axed if he hab dat woman to truly lub in wheels and woes, until one of dem turn up dar toes, Sammy—I will."

CHAPTER VI.

NO MEAN FOE. 32

The boats were now advancing steadily—evidently with the intention of capturing the Belvedere, or sinking in the attempt. The guns of our hero's craft played upon them; but it is a difficult thing to hit small, moving objects with large weapons, and our readers need not be surprised at the fact that twenty shots only succeeded in sinking one boat.

The others, without stopping to pick up the struggling ones, came on in a wide semicircle, and, arriving within half a mile, the center boats paused, and the others continued rowing until they formed a ring—then they all came on at a rapid pace.

Seven boats in all, with more than two hundred men well armed for the attack—no mean foe for Handsome Harry to contend with.

One more was sunk by a well-directed shot; but the others dashed on, and struck the sides of the Belvedere almost simultaneously. Then, with fierce yells, the Brazilians came clambering up.

But fast they showed above the bulwarks they were cut down, and men, with great gaping wounds, fell back upon their comrades or into the sea. Handsome Harry, Samson and Ching-Ching did wonderful work, and at their post the Belvedere was at least secure.

Bill Grunt was not so fortunate.

The boat which struck against his standing-place brought with it a number of fierce and reckless men, who thought their lives of but little account, and deemed their blood as water. They were the members of a fanatical race, who looked upon a violent death as the true road to paradise.

These fellows were not clad in sailor's costume, but a light linen dress and turban. Arms and legs were naked, and they displayed the activity of cats. A few were cut down; but the rest came clambering over, and with yells leapt upon the deck.

Tom True was not far away, but he could render no assistance, having as much on his

hands as he could deal with, and the foe threatened to carry victory with them.

Old Cutten slipped and fell upon his back just as one of the turbaned enemy struck at him. This mishap saved his life, but it was fatal to his wooden leg, the fellow's crease shaving it off as clean as if it had been removed by machinery.

Another fellow aimed a blow at Bill Grunt's head, and just succeeded in splitting the tip of his nose. The wound was at once ridiculous and painful, and Bill, with a howl of fury, dashed into the thick of the invaders.

Then he too, like Cutten, slipped and fell. A dozen creases were held over him, and he mentally gave up his life, when lo! there suddenly appeared upon the scene a man who had the activity of twenty—a man who fought with his arms and kicked with his legs, hurling the foe over like skittles.

"I'm darned if it ain't Ching-Ching," cried Bill Grunt, springing up. "Who'd have thought it?"

"Golly! Down go one with a ki—ki," cried Ching-Ching, as he dispatched another; "and you, sar—you berry much like de man dat kick my farder when him looking at de shop window in Pekin. Take dat, ko—ko—sliminy—sliminy. Oh! you will get in de way, sar, when a genlyman want to pass," and down went a third.

Ching-Ching was a perfect windmill, and whoever got in the way of his sails was knocked over. The fanatical gentlemen did not know what to make of him; but they were more astonished when Handsome Harry and Samson joined him.

Our hero and his followers had dispatched their little boat-load, all of whom had either been killed or wounded, and he was now at liberty to give aid to the other defenders.

From party to party he went, followed by Samson and Ching-Ching; and wherever the trio touched, there they took confusion to the foe. It was awful to see the carnage; but they were dealing with a remorseless enemy who had been mad enough to cry "No quarter!" and now received none.

The Brazilian officer, with his arms

bound behind him, stood hopelessly looking on the scene with bitter feelings. What would he have given to have played his part in the fight and done something to avenge his captivity? But he was powerless, and could do nothing.

"He is not a man—he is a giant," he muttered, as his eyes followed the movements of Handsome Harry; "and those two fellows behind him are devils—stay! are there only two? No, that accursed Chinese makes a dozen of himself."

When first his friends attacked, his heart beat high with the conviction of their success; but as the fight progressed he saw that they had their work cut out to escape utter annihilation.

The Belvederes were brave to a man. The only one who had professed nervousness was Ching-Ching, and we all know what a humbug he was when he made his will and left his important property to his friends around him. Some people may doubt whether he had anything to leave; but whether he had or not time will show.

With half of the Brazilians put hors de combat, the day was with the Belvederes, but there was no retreat for the foe, except by swimming, as their boats had, in obedience to a shout from Harry, been sunk with cold shot.

With his own hands he led the work of destruction, and raising a thirty-pound shot, sent it through the bottom of a boat as if it were shot from a gun.

This example was followed by others, and such of the Brazilians as were not swimming for their lives, or wounded, or dead, were on the deck of the Belvedere at the mercy of the victors.

It had been Harry's intention to show his appreciation of this unwarranted attack by giving no quarter, but a better feeling prevailed, and seeing them cowed and beaten, he bade them throw down their arms and take their lives.

A clatter of cutlasses and pistols upon the deck followed, and the beaten men, with folded arms, gathered together.

Harry chose a watching party and set it over them. Then bidding Tom and Ira—both of whom had received scratches, but

nothing serious—to look to the wounded, he turned his attention to the frigate.

She still lay end on toward the Belvedere, going with the current, and on her fore-castle were gathered the remnant of the crew. Those men showed by their silence that they perfectly understood the turn affairs had taken, and very much objected to it.

Aft were the remaining officers, clustered together and holding a consultation. The result of this shortly appeared.

A cutter was lowered, and an officer with a crew of six men came off, the officer carrying a white flag. As he neared the Belvedere, Harry stood forward to speak to him.

"What would you?" he asked.

"Peace," answered the officer.

"You come a little late," said Harry, scornfully.

"You belong to a generous nation," answered the Brazilian, "and will not be hard upon a defeated foe; we knew nothing of your strength, and miscalculated our own."

"So it seems. Well?"

"The flower of our crew is with you—alive and dead. We ask you to make terms of peace."

Harry thought for a moment, and then said:

"By all the rules of warfare, your ship is mine; but I have no need of it, and it would only encumber me; but you must pay the penalty of your rashness. You must send me powder and small arms, and grant me such men as volunteer for my service. I have need of ten."

"So be it," said the officer.

"And carry it out faithfully," said the officer on the deck of the Belvedere; "attempt no tricks, for we are no match for him."

The other looked a little curious, and made a sign. He on the deck answered it, and the officer with the flag sat down with a despairing gesture.

"Lost, and put to shame," he muttered; "henceforth the Anita must hide its head."

He went back to the Anita, and soon all was life and bustle on board, emptying the magazine and filling the boats with the powder casks. Meanwhile Harry asked the Brazilians who would volunteer.

The answer was emphatic. Every man stood forward.

"But I cannot have you all," our hero said; "there is not room on board the Belvedere. I want ten men. You must draw lots."

Then ensued a strange scene.

The men who, half an hour before, had been thirsting for Handsome Harry's life, were now eager to shed their blood in his service, and eagerly they gathered round the bag in which their lot depended. Such is the influence of bravery.

The number of beans were told out—one for each man—ten black and the rest white. As they drew, the men who got the black ones hugged them as if they were precious gems; those who got the white cast them aside with angry exclamations.

"Let us remain, brave capitano," said one; "you are sure to have plenty of fighting, and we can fill up the gaps."

"I thank you," returned Harry; "but I cannot carry you. I shall, however, be at Fortalago in a month, and, if any of you are there, you can see if I have room for you."

"At Fortalago," muttered the Brazilian officer; "I will remember."

The transfer of the powder and small arms occupied two hours, and when it was completed the cutter's seamen were sent back to their own ship—the lucky drawers of the black beans remaining on board.

The Belvedere was now thoroughly replenished with arms and men, but Harry still resolved to go to Fortalago, as he had business with Don Salvo. The two ships floated with the current until night, when a breeze sprang up, and, the Belvedere spreading her sails, speedily left the frigate far behind.

CHAPTER VII.

CHING-CHING MAKES A NEW PIANO.

Back again to Fortalago, with the sun blistering the decks, and the sea sparkling like a plain covered with enormous diamonds. The little town looks hot, and

white, and thirsty; and Don Salvo, who comes off to visit the Belvedere, looks white and qualmish.

Handsome Harry received him on deck, under an awning, where he sat smoking a cheroot and drinking claret. Tom True was near him, smoking, too; and behind him were Ching-Ching and Samson playing dominoes, and Ira Staines looking on.

"How fares it with you, Don Salvo?" asked Harry.

"How should it fare with me in this beastly sea?" snarled Don Salvo. "Why is it never at rest? Up and down—up and down—as if it took pleasure in disturbing a poor, weak, helpless old man."

"You look very well for one in such a sore strait—sit down."

"Thank you."

"Will you smoke, don?" asked Tom, presenting his cigar case.

"Ugh!" shuddered the don, turning away.

"You ought to know better, young man; my stomach is not made of leather."

"Dat my double-six," said Samson, behind.

"Oh, no, Sammy," replied Ching-Ching, softly. "How can dat be, when I play him just now?"

"But I swar I hab him in my run," said Samson.

"You wrong, Sammy. What say you, Massa Staines?"

"That you are the biggest liar and rascal I ever met, bar none!" replied Ira.

"Did Massa Staines eber look in de glass?" asked Ching-Ching.

"Go on with your game," said Ira, "and give me no cheek."

"The business I have with you, don, is very simple," said Harry, after a while, "and can be talked over here. You need not go, Tom; there is nothing secret. You know Santa Chardo, don?"

"Well," replied the don, wrinkling up his nutcracker visage.

"Pretty good assortment of rogues there."

"Aye, yes! What of that?"

"Did you know Don Travio?"

"I ought to. He is a servant of mine."

"A servant of yours? Indeed!" said Harry, lighting a second cigar from the

stump of the first. "Can you tell me how he became intimate with Brocken?"

"He intimate with Brocken?" hissed the don, smiting his hands together and looking like an ugly genii in his wrath. "His life shall pay the forfeit if he has betrayed me."

"He has given it up," said Harry, and then, in brief terms, he told the don all that had happened at Santo Chardo.

As the story proceeded the visage of the Spaniard became appalling. The dark passions of a dozen men were written upon his mummified face, and his long claw-like hands opened and shut with an eager, angry movement, as if he longed to tear something piecemeal.

"So," he said, "this is why we have been foiled. Brocken has been made acquainted with our movements. Mixed up with his Santa Chardo lot, he was more than a match for us. But now all know. You know the river Luabila?"

"I have passed it often," returned Harry.

"That is Brocken's hiding place now," said the don. "It is the stronghold of those I deemed faithful to me. But go there, show this ring, and let them put no straw in the stream against you if they dare."

"A potent ring!" said Harry.

"A powerful one," rejoined the don, "for kings have bowed before it ere now."

"Shall I wear it here?"

"Not for your life. Every man knows it, and would deem you a robber. They would stop you on speculation and bring it back to me."

"I will store it safely away," said Harry, rising. "Tom, get some more claret."

Tom and Harry departed, and Ira Staines having watched the game of dominoes long enough, sauntered forward. Ching-Ching and Samson were thus left with the don.

Looking up, Ching-Ching caught the Spaniard's eye, and smiled in a friendly manner. Don Salvo frowned at him like a thunder cloud, but Ching-Ching was not to be easily daunted. Returning to the game, he said to Samson in a tone of voice just loud enough for the ears of the man for whom it was intended:

"Berry handsome ole genlyman, Sammy."

The great weakness of Spaniards is their

vanity. They believe themselves to be the handsomest fellows in the world—as indeed some of them are—and not one, old or young, ever believed that he was ugly. The don pretended not to hear, but he pricked up his ears, and Ching-Ching went on:

"Nebber see sech handsome ole genlyman before, Sammy. He better looking dan mv uncle at Pekin, who ran away wid de lady dat engage to de emperry to be married. My uncle so handsome dat he 'bliged to go 'bout in a veil to keep de gals off. Dis ole genlyman fix up a lot ob dem, I reckon. He got a berry gay look 'bout de eye."

The eye of the don was a very bilious one, about the color of a saffron bun. It twinkled with an air of satisfaction as Ching-Ching soaped him down.

"If my wife was here," continued Ching-Ching, "I lock her up while dis berry lubly ole genlyman stop on board."

"Hab you got a wife?" asked Samson.

"Two," replied Ching-Ching; "they were twins, and one wouldn't be married without de oder, so I propose to bof."

"And marry bof?"

"No, Sammy," replied Ching-Ching, as if shocked; "I marry one ob dem, and t'other marry me. We married on a Monday, and on Tuesday I run away. Golly, it was berry jolly! But dis ole genlyman very handsome, ain't he, Sammy?"

Samson, who was as innocent as a sucking dove, looked at the weazened old man before him, and failing to find anything approaching beauty, knew not what to say. He rolled his eyes, opened his mouth, and then shut it again, speechless. The don came to his relief. Turning to Ching-Ching, he said:

"You were not on board the Belvedere when she was last here?"

"No, handsome genlyman. I was den a pris'ner wid a lot ob low curses ob pirates. Tank you for making de 'quiry, handsome genlyman."

"Have you joined her for good?"

"Yes, handsome genlyman; for berry much good. I great rascal afore, but I berry good now. Once I get drunk and nebber speak de trufe; now I berry good, handsome genlyman. Sammy know dat, eh, Sammy?"

Again Sammy was a little bit fixed, and once more the don came to his relief.

"You are a very civil young fellow," he said to Ching-Ching; "and there is a dollar for you."

"Oh, tank you, sar; you berry liberal and handsome, too."

"You were speaking about your uncle at Pekin," continued the don, in a casual manner; "a very good-looking man, I believe."

"Berry, sar," replied Ching-Ching; "he de chief mandarin at de court. Tied up de empy's pig-tail with a fork when him take a walk. Dat a berry high office, handsome and liberal genlyman."

"Indeed! I know very little of China," said the don.

"It a berry rum place," said Ching-Ching, looking at him out of the corner of his eyes; "dey berry fond ob handsome Spanish genlymen when dey get 'em. I see two dere, sir, not so handsome as you—oh, no, berry ugly in complarison—but dey lib in big palace and people pay ten dollar to see 'em—through the key-hole."

"The Chinese are a cursed ugly race," said the don.

"Berry, sar," replied Ching-Ching, "'cept my uncle and me."

"And what do you call yourself?"

"Not bad looking, sar, for a poor Chineeman."

"Gad! it's well you put a tail to your sentence," said the don.

And the return of Tom True and Harry put an end to the conversation.

A little later the don rose to take his leave, and Harry, drawing him apart, said in an undertone:

"How is Juanita?"

"Passing well," replied the don.

"Why did she not come on board with you?"

"Because it was my wish that she should stay at home," replied the don, grimly.

"However, you shall see her if you wish. Come ashore with your officers and dine with me to-night."

"With pleasure," replied Harry. "What time?"

"Eight. And, by the way, that Chinaman seems a civil sort of a fellow."

"Very," dryly returned our hero.

"There will be room for him with the muleteers in the kitchen," said the don.

"Let him come, and that nigger fellow, too."

"I have no doubt that they will be extremely pleased."

Then the don stepped into the boat, and rolling himself up in a cloak, prepared to endure the agony of the passage between the Belvedere and the shore.

Harry informed Ching-Ching of the invitation he had received, which our friend acknowledged very graciously.

"I put on my berry best dress, and do credit to de genlyman," he said.

And on being left alone with Samson, indulged in a little pantomimic action, expressive of his having soaped the don beautifully.

CHAPTER VIII. 34

THE MULETEERS' FEAST.

About half-past seven the boat was got ready to take the party ashore. Harry, Tom and Ira went in uniform, Samson in his usual blue shirt and trousers, and Ching-Ching turned out in his best, 'a suit very like that worn every day, but covered with all sorts of cabalistic characters, such as one sees on tea-chests and other articles from China.

"Where on earth did he get that toggery from?" growled Bill Grunt, as he and Cutten watched the boat receding toward the shore. "His whole kit was in a pocket-handkerchief."

Old Cutten, whose broken wooden leg had been spliced together in rather a clumsy manner, turned his quid over and replied:

"You might as well ax me where he gets his cheek from. I don't know. But I do wonder at the captain takin' sech low loafers with him, and leaving men like you and I on board."

"It warn't his fault. I heerd Chingy soaping the old himage; but I don't want to

run the Chinaman down—he saved my life.”

The house of Don Salvo was situated near the beach, at the foot of a sloping hill, which saved it a little from the rough storms of wind familiar to those parts. It was a long, low, rambling building, but handsome on the whole, and very roomy inside.

The ground around it was very spacious, that in front being used as a courtyard. On entering this the party from the Belvedere discovered a number of mules tethered to rings in the wall. Numerous lamps were scattered about, which, with the aid of the moon, afforded them ample light.

Don Salvo met them at the door, and, having greeted his more distinguished guests, pointed out to Ching-Ching a gallery on the right.

“You will find the kitchen there.”

“Tank you, handsome genlyman,” replied Ching-Ching.

Don Salvo turned upon his heel, and Ching-Ching cut a caper, expressive of his utter contempt for his host.

This was nearly fatal to him, for the don, turning again, caught him in the very act.

“How now, sir?” he said sternly.

“So berry glad, sar, handsome sar,” returned Ching-Ching, humbly; “when I berry glad I ’bliged to kick out, or I should tumble on my back.”

The don looked a little doubtful, but Ching-Ching was so very meek and mild that it was impossible to suspect him of malice, so he was bidden to betake himself to the kitchen, and thither, followed by the delighted Samson, he went.

A few feet on the other side of the archway they discovered a door, from behind which there came the noise of laughter. Rightly deeming this to be the entrance to the kitchen, Ching-Ching raised the latch and went in.

A large room, with huge rafters above, on which were strung hams, onions and many kinds of fruit, met Ching-Ching’s eye. Below, scattered about, sitting, kneeling and standing, were about sixty men and women of the handsome Spaniard cast of form and face.

None perceived our friend, who stood in

the doorway, bowing, with a smile of propitiation on his face, for full ten minutes, and then a girl, turning, saw the stranger.

Her little scream attracted the attention of the rest, and a swaggering young fellow, with no end of velvet, buttons and tassels about him, came over from the throng.

“By all the saints,” he cried, “who is this?”

“Dis is Samson,” replied Ching-Ching, “and I’m a lilly Chinee.”

“And what may you want here?”

“Noting but de flowerous society of dese ladies here. I been all ober de world, but nebber see such black eyes. Dey reg’lar piercers. Oh, my poor heart, it skewered right through!”

The men pounced upon him with that stagey air for which Spaniards are celebrated, but Ching-Ching had “fixed” the women, like a wise man, and his footing was made sure.

“You must get out of here,” said the young swaggerer.

“What for?” asked a pretty girl, pushing him aside; “that’s just like you, Pedro—down upon every inoffensive stranger.”

“Me berry inoffensive,” said Ching-Ching, sidling into a seat, “and Sammy more inoffensive still. Your berry good massa, Don Salvo, invite us here. Our handsome massa, Capen Harry, of the Belvedere, come wid us.”

“You belong to the Belvedere?” asked another woman.

“Dat so,” grinned Samson.

“De truth hab fallen from your lubly lips,” said Ching-Ching.

“Whatever comes from the Belvedere is welcome here!” cried a dozen voices. “Drink, my lads!”

A dozen tankards were handed toward them, and Samson emptied one at a draught. Ching-Ching, with the utmost kindness and consideration, took a draught from each of those remaining, and then smiled like a man who had done his duty.

The young girl who had first shown him a little attention now asked Ching-Ching if he would like anything to eat. Both of the guests declared themselves ready for anything.

The girl showed Ching-Ching so much attention that Pedro frowned more heavily than ever, and when she had placed a ham, some figs and a flagon of wine before our friends, he seized her roughly by the hand and jerked her away.

"Let go, Pedro," she said, with her dark eyes flashing.

"You forget yourself, Arnia," he hissed; "do you trifle with——"

"I am neither a child nor a dog," she said.

"But you are a woman, and bound to me, Arnia."

"Until I choose to break the binding," she replied.

"Would you break it for that—that——" Pedro could find no proper term for Ching-Ching, so he left the sentence unfinished.

"Anything is better than a bully," said Arnia, looking him steadily in the face; "you cannot nourish a woman on blows—you must give her love."

"I will give him my dagger," muttered Pedro, pointing to the apparently unconscious Ching-Ching, who was walking into the ham with the skill of an experienced hand.

"Pooh! That for your dagger!" said Arnia, snapping her fingers, and Pedro withdrew into a corner to indulge in a savage sulk.

"I hope you have all you require," said Arnia.

"Yes," replied Samson; but Ching-Ching was more diplomatic.

"I nebber hab all I want," he said, rolling his eyes about, "until I hab you."

"Oh, go along!" said Arnia, touching him lightly upon the shoulder.

Ching-Ching seized her small brown hand and kissed it tenderly.

"Look out, Chinaman!" cried a voice behind, and Ching-Ching sprang aside.

The next moment Pedro's arm passed by, and his dagger pierced the table.

Then Ching-Ching turned from the lamb to the lion, and seizing Pedro by the throat, he shook him as a dog would a rat, amid cries of "Bravo!" from the company. They were a rough, wild lot of men, but justice demands that we should state that they had no sympathy with Pedro's unmanly attack.

At last Ching-Ching let him go, and, almost lifeless and gasping, he fell upon the floor.

"Water," he cried, but none of his friends gave him any.

Arnia stood near him until he had recovered a little, and then pointing sternly toward the door, said:

"I always thought you a bit of a brute, but I never expected to find you a coward. Go!"

"Arnia, Arnia!" he groaned.

"Go," she repeated, "and let me never see your dastard face again. Could you think so lightly of me as to suppose that I could shift my love from one to the other as you put a saddle from mule to mule? I despise you. Go!"

The withering scorn seemed to make him shrink to half his usual size, and with his head bent he slunk through the door. Arnia closed it behind him, and he was gone.

Just for a moment she pressed her hand upon her heart, but speedily stifling her emotion, she bade the startled muleteers resume their merriment.

"Forget him," she said, "as I do. Was he not rightly served?"

"He was," they answered.

Ching-Ching resumed his seat and his meal, and he and Samson between them polished the bone. This over, a dance was proposed.

"Where is the guitar?" asked Arnia.

"Nebber mind de guitar," replied Ching-Ching; "I carry music about wid me. Stand by, Samson, and beat de time."

Then, to the great admiration of all present, and the complete overpowering of Samson, Ching-Ching beat out music from his cheeks with the palms of his hands, making the notes with different formations of his mouth.

The tune was quaint and sparkling, such as the Spaniards had never heard before, but it suited the fandango, and at it they went, Samson, grinning all over his face, leading off with Arnia.

Without one pause or break, Ching-Ching continued to hammer upon his cheeks for nearly twenty minutes, and then the dancers gave in.

"You must be thirsty, friend," said one of the muleteers.

"Berry," replied Ching-Ching, and a number of tankards being held toward him, he patronized them as liberally as before.

"What dat dere?" he cried, espying a box in the corner; "dat sumfin from my country."

"It came out of a Chinese trader anchored on this coast," replied one of the muleteers; "there is nothing in it but a handkerchief, a flower-pot, a top, an old sword, and a few other trifles."

"Let me look at dem," said Ching-Ching, his eyes lighting up with enthusiasm.

The box was handed up and placed upon the table. As soon as Ching-Ching got a fair look at it he exclaimed:

"I tought so!"

"Tought what?" asked Samson.

"Dis my uncle's box," said Ching-Ching, looking round upon the company; "de box of my long-lost uncle."

"Dat must be anoder uncle," begun Samson, innocently, when Ching-Ching rapidly interposed, addressing the rest:

"You must know, my frens," he said, "dat once I had an uncle, berry rich, berry good, and berry charitable uncle, who always feed de poor and look after him lilly neffys sech as me. But de emperor send him away to sea, to de furrin parts, and den we see dat berry good uncle no more."

Here Ching-Ching covered his eyes and sobbed. The listeners were much affected—all but Samson, who looked on and listened like one in a dream.

The character of his friend had always been a puzzle to Samson, but now it was getting quite bewildering.

"We wait for long years," continued Ching-Ching, "and time kind o' soffen down my grief, when I see dis box, and know what am inside. My frens, afore I open de box I tell you so dat you know I speak de trufe. Inside dere am a flower-pot, a sword, a top, a fan and a few other lilly things. Am I right?"

A chorus of affirmatives answered him, and Ching-Ching smiled gladly.

"And dis box you know to be mine?"

Again they responded to him as he de-

sired. The box was of no value to them, they said, or to anybody else as far as they could see.

"Now, I got my property again," said Ching-Ching, forgetting that it had never been his before, "I show you something."

And then he spun the top as only a Chinaman could spin it, making it travel up and down the edge of the sword, and finally finishing on the very point. After this he twisted two pieces of paper into the semblance of butterflies, and with the fan made them disport themselves as natural as life.

But his great and really wonderful trick was with the flower-pot.

Covering it with a silk handkerchief, he sat upon the table cross-legged, and muttered something which sounded like an incantation. The handkerchief rose slowly up to the height of about six inches, and then he whisked it off, revealing a young orange tree.

Waving back the eager company, he covered it again and continued his incantation. Higher and higher rose the handkerchief, to at least two feet, and then he whisked it off again.

The tree was then in blossom.

Cries of admiration sprang from many lips, but a few of the most superstitious crossed themselves. Such wonders savored of dealings with the evil one.

"More to come," said Ching-Ching, and covered it again.

A third incantation turned the blossom into fruit, and then the reputation of the conjurer was established. One orange, and one only, he plucked from the tree. This he gave to Arnica.

"Keep dat," he said, "for my sweet sake."

Arnica put the magic fruit in her bosom, and the performance terminated with the reduction of the tree to a simple flower-pot full of earth again. Ching-Ching pushed away the things in the box, and tied it round with a cord so as to have it ready to take away.

The dancing began again and songs were sung, and in both of these accomplishments Samson and Ching-Ching came to the fore. Between his dances the former took an opportunity to speak to his friend.

"Ching," he said, "am dat box your uncle's?"

Ching-Ching looked at him with a slyness which defies description, and answered, "I tink not, Sammy."

"How know you, den, what was inside?"

"It is all written out," replied Ching-Ching; "me read Chineese."

"But de tricks, Chingy?"

"Me berry great conjurer," replied Ching-Ching, and that was all he would say.

A complete description of that wonderful evening need not be given here; suffice it to say that the merriment never flagged for a moment, and that Samson and Ching-Ching were the life of the party.

A little after eleven a messenger came in to say that the officers had already gone, and then came a round of adieux.

Ching-Ching and Samson then swallowed a parting glass, and the former having shouldered his precious box, they sallied forth.

"My heart am all on fire
For de berry sweet Arnia,
With a ki-ki-ki,"

sang Ching-Ching as he staggered past the front door, where, as ill-luck would have it, Don Salvo was standing.

Now Ching-Ching sober was a very diplomatic person, but Ching-Ching drunk was apt to be reckless; and now, as he caught sight of the don, he forgot his former complimentary notices of his charms, and addressed him in a very different style.

"How de do, old leather chops?" he said; "dem berry skinny legs ob yourn."

"What, sir?" cried the don.

"You are complete darn old skewer," continued Ching-Ching; "you jist like a skinny bird call de cockchafer. Oh, you are a berry bony ole sinner!"

It is not in our power to adequately convey an idea of the wrath of that much insulted don. He saw how he had been imposed upon—how he had been flattered into feeding a man who was a loathsome reviler, and his countenance, bilious at the best of times, became awful to look upon.

"You thief—you ugly brute!" he gasped, "what have you got in that box?"

"Some ob me family property," replied Ching-Ching, "which you rob my berry noble uncle of. Oh, you berry wicked ole stick!"

This was too much, and Don Salvo, with a furious gesture, rushed back into the house and began to call aloud for the servants. Samson, seeing that it was time to be off, swung Ching-Ching round and urged him to depart.

Our friend readily obeyed—he was always obedient to Samson, even in his worst moments—and in a few minutes they had left the don's villa far behind them.

But the dangers of the night were not yet over.

There was one who smarted under a deep sense of injury, and who had been waiting with the patience of a tiger for Ching-Ching.

This was Pedro, who, with dagger drawn, stood in the shade of a porch, and as Ching-Ching went singing by, rushed out and stabbed him fiercely in the back.

Down went our friend with a clang, as if he was made of metal, and Samson, who saw the blow, but was unable to prevent it, sprang upon the muleteer.

CHAPTER IX. 35

SAVED BY A VICIOUS PROPENSITY.

"Golly!" cried Samson, fiercely; "you pay berry dearly for dis, sar!"

"I care not," hissed the muleteer, as he writhed in his strong grasp; "I have had my revenge—ha, ha!"

His laugh only roused Samson more, and the strong, black arms closed round him with a vise-like grasp. Pedro felt as if every bone in his skin was being smashed, and with short shrieks and gasps between the words he begged for mercy.

"Don't kill him quite, Sammy," said Ching-Ching; "he not hurt me."

"Not hurt you!" exclaimed Samson; "why, he stab you."

"No; him only hit me."

Pedro's dagger had broken short off, and

He still held the hilt in his hand, a proof positive that he had really stabbed his friend; but how was it that Ching-Ching was now so calmly sitting upon his box?

"Don't hurt him, Sammy," he said again; "let us tie him to dis door-post and leaf him."

For this purpose he whipped off a part of the cord of his box, and firmly tied the hands and feet of Pedro round the pillar of the portico. This done, Ching-Ching confiscated his turban and sash as the legitimate spoil of the victor, and presented them to Samson.

"Jest de sort ob tings to show off your beauty, Sammy," he said.

Reshouldering his box, they moved away, and reached the shore without further molestation. There they found a boat in waiting, with the information that their captain was already on board, and had sent this boat for them, with the intimation that their grog would be stopped for a week as a punishment for their not turning up at the proper time.

When they had taken their seats, Samson asked Ching-Ching how it was that he had escaped the dagger of Pedro.

"Me not escape him," replied Ching-Ching; "him in my back now."

The eyes of Samson nearly started out of his head as Ching-Ching replied thus. Putting that with the conjuring, Ching-Ching surely must be more than mortal.

"But, Chingy-Chingy, it onposserbul for you to stand dat!"

"Me show you when we get on board," replied Ching-Ching.

When the Belvedere was reached all was quiet, none but the watch being on deck. Samson and Ching-Ching made an attempt to get below without disturbing anybody, but the latter slipped and fell, his fall being accompanied by the same clatter which had previously astonished Samson.

This, however, brought out nobody, and they managed to get to their cabin, and then Samson obtained a light.

"Now, Chingy, show me dat dagger," said Samson.

Turning up his foot, Ching-Ching brought down from his back a saucepan-lid with the

dagger-blade sticking through it; next he produced an iron plate-warmer, which had turned aside the point and saved him.

"I found dese tings," he said, "lyin' loose about de kitchen. I also got a few more."

It appeared that he had a great many, for the back of his jacket was like a magical hat—he produced so many things from it. His trousers' pockets were also full, and there were a few trifles in the box. Samson knew not what to say, and Ching-Ching proceeded to arrange them as if they were for sale.

Here is the list:

Four saucepan-lids—the handle of an old stew-pan—a toasting-fork—half a willow-pattern plate—two pocket-handkerchiefs—a comb and brush (much worn)—a slipper and a boot—a rolling-pin—three muleteers' whips—four knives and six forks—eleven spoons—a piece of matting and a lump of coal.

"Dat not so bad," said Ching-Ching, complacently, "all done atween de courting and dancing."

"It strikes me," replied Samson, "dat you get into trouble."

"Me allers getting into trouble," returned Ching-Ching, "and me allers gettin' out—with a ki-ki-ki stock a cum ditily."

"If you make that row look out for squalls," said Sammy.

"Quiet now," said Ching-Ching.

"What de use ob all dis stuff, Chingy?" asked Samson, pointing to the dark night's work.

"No use, Sammy."

"What for you take 'em, den?"

"Me not know. Me can't help it!"

"Now, Chingy, am dat de trufe?" asked Samson, earnestly.

"It am," replied Ching-Ching; "I got what de swells call chiptomarea."

It ought to be here explained that Ching-Ching meant "kleptomania," a vice not entirely unknown even among the best of people. A late prime minister of England never went anywhere without stealing something, and it was quite a recognized thing to let him go, and on the morrow his servant invariably brought the articles back. Did Ching-Ching speak the truth? But our read-

ers know the little reason we have to doubt him.

"I tink," said Ching-Ching, "dat we had better get rid ob it."

"Whar?" asked Samson.

"Is ole Cutten on watch?"

"Yes, he am. I saw him jis as we come aboard."

"Den put 'em into his hammock," said Ching-Ching.

This was quietly done, and the two friends, satisfied that they had done their duty, retired to rest.

About two hours later old Cutten came hammering at their door, swearing most frightfully; but although both of them were aroused and fully conscious of what it meant, they only snored the louder, and the indignant seaman at last retired, declaring:

"That he would see the capen airly tomorrow, and ax him if people has to be druy clean out of their blessed wits by a skunking nigger and a putty-headed Chineese chap."

And in the morning he took the lot up with the design of carrying his threat into execution, but meeting with Tom True, he was advised to pitch the things overboard and say nothing about it.

"It can't be proved who did it, you know," said Tom.

"But I know it's them," urged Cutten.

"You believe it, you mean; better pitch the lot overboard."

After a little more demurring Cutten did as was desired, and barely had the miscellaneous articles of plunder settled on the bottom when Ching-Ching and Samson came up fresh and smiling.

Ching-Ching was in his ordinary, and Bill Grunt, who had been puzzling over the change of attire, bore down upon him.

"I say, Mister Ching-Ching," he said, "a word with you."

"As many as you like, Massa Grunt."

"How about that suit o' yourn? Where do you keep that go-to-meeting suit o' yourn?"

"Which go-to-meeting?"

"The one with the rum figures all over it."

"I keep him, Massa Grunt, on my back."

"What, do you wear two suits?"

"No, Massa Grunt; but I turn dis inside out!" and away went our friend, leaving Bill Grunt to his reflections.

About noon Don Salvo came on board, and both Samson and Ching-Ching, with a most commendable prudence, retired below. They thought he had come to lay a complaint against them; but if he did so, he changed his mind, for he did not allude to them in any way. His business was of a different nature.

"What have you been doing?" he said to Harry, as he entered the cabin.

"When and where?"

"I have received this letter from the commander of the district to desire you to remain here for awhile."

"This means mischief, Don Salvo."

"Yes; and now I warn you to remain."

"Seriously?" said Harry, smiling.

"Take it as you please," said Don Salvo; "remember that I have warned you. I have done my duty."

"Perhaps it means nothing, after all."

"That's spoken like a young man," said the don, testily; "why should they wish to detain you but for a serious purpose? But then I must do my duty, and I tell you to remain."

"Good-by, Don," said Harry; "give my love to Juanita, and tell her that I shall keep my promise."

"And what was that?"

"To be true to her, even if her foolish old father stood out against us. Good-by. I must away."

"Too late!" cried the don, pointing through the cabin window with trembling fingers; "the Belvedere is lost. The Anita!"

Harry, startled, turned and looked, and there at the mouth of the harbor was the Brazilian man-of-war with a crowd of men upon her deck.

"I will fight her," he said.

"What can you do?" asked the don; "she has taken in fresh stores and fresh men; in five minutes she could sink you."

There was no denying the truth of this, but all was not lost until ruin had really overwhelmed him, and Harry refused to believe that all chance of escape was gone.

"The odds are heavy," he said, "but I will see what strategy can do."

"You have a bold heart."

"Get you now on shore, and if I lose my life this day my last word will be for Juanita. Farewell, Don?"

"You will exonerate me if you are taken prisoner?" asked the don anxiously.

"Go," said Harry; "I would not betray a foe, much less a friend."

He accompanied the don on deck, and saw him into his boat. Then he proceeded to examine the foe.

The Anita had anchored broadside on to the mouth of the harbor, with her guns pointing at the Belvedere. Everything was undoubtedly ready for action. A few minutes later a boat put off full of well-armed men and pulled over the bar.

CHAPTER X.

A CLEVER MOVE.

The Anita was nearly two miles away still, and between it and the Belvedere lay several small fishing craft, all of whom were now actively preparing to get out of the way. The look of the bulky frigate was enough to warn the most inexperienced that there was mischief in the wind.

As the boat drew nearer Harry could see that it was commanded by the officer whom he had held as prisoner, and a smile flashed across his face as he thought of the satisfaction the fellow must feel at having, as he thought, his bitter foe in his power.

When within twenty yards of the Belvedere the boat pulled up and the officer hailed:

"Belvedere, aboard there!"

"Well?" said Harry.

"In the name of the Emperor of the Brazils, I command you to surrender."

"And in the name of all that is British, I refuse to do so," said Harry.

His answer elicited a cheer from such of his men as were standing by, and the Brazilian officer bit his lips.

"You must be mad to think that you can contend against us," he said.

"And you must be a cowardly set to attack us," returned Harry.

"It is our duty to rid the sea of villainous pirates."

"Then do it; and leave honest men alone."

"You are no honest man."

"Come ashore with me," replied Harry—"that is, if you dare—and I will prove to you that I carry very honest steel."

Another cheer from the Belvedere, and a smothered laugh from the Brazilians. The officer turned pale with rage.

"I cannot fight with a lot of sea thieves and ruffians."

"Your cowardice," said Harry, "seeks refuge in wild, unfounded assertions. If you lack courage to come ashore, return to the ship."

"I am commanded to seize your vessel."

"If you come a foot nearer I will sink you."

This determined rejoinder had the desired effect, and the boat came no nearer.

"Go back," cried Harry again, "and bring all your boats. We will give them as good a reception as before. As for the Anita, she must remain where she is, for there is not draught of water to bring her in."

"But while she is there you cannot come out," said the officer.

"We shall see," rejoined Harry. "Go back to your ship, my good fellow."

The contemptuous tone of our hero stung the Brazilian nearly to madness—but he was not mad enough to risk an assault upon the Belvedere—and after some little show of lingering there, he ordered the men to pull back.

"Got his tail between his legs, capen," said Ira. "I reckon that he is in no hurry to shove his nose on board."

"They will attack at night," said Harry; "but I hope before then to bring confusion upon them. Can you swim?"

"Pretty fairly, capen."

"Can you do a mile?"

"Easily."

"Then I shall want you to-night. Tom?"

"Yes."

"You are a good hand at natation?"

"A regular duck."

"Then you will do," said Harry. "Now, I want two more."

"There is Samson."

"Yes; and I wonder if that precious Chinaman can swim."

Ching-Ching was sent for, and on being asked the question, modestly replied, "that he had been in de water now and den."

"Can you swim a distance? Say—from here to the Anita?"

"Oh, yes, sar."

"That is all I want," said Harry.

"All my fam'ly berry good swimmers," began Ching-Ching, when Harry interrupted him:

"Oh, yes, I know," he said; "your father, mother, sister and brother—with an uncle or two—were all up to it. You can go now."

"Tank you, sar; me berry glad to go," replied Ching-Ching.

"He is the most impudent beggar I ever met with," said Tom True, laughing, "and nothing seems to ruffle him. Bill Grunt says that he won't stand much more of him."

"What has he been doing now?"

"Oh, he and Samson asked the old boatswain if he would like to hear a yarn, and, of course, he said yes. So Ching-Ching brought an empty powder box for him to sit upon, which had tar upon one side of it, and they kept him there until he was regularly fixed, with some precious lie about Ching-Ching's uncle. Then they made off, and Bill found himself regularly fixed. Old Cutten got the box off after a tough job, but nothing on earth will clean the sitting part of his trousers."

A laugh at Bill Grunt's expense followed the narration, and as that worthy now appeared with a complaint to make in his eyes, Harry marched away and Tom True interrupted the boatswain and gave him a few general orders.

After the return of the boat to the Anita no further attempt was made to board the Belvedere, but by the aid of his glass Harry could see that they were quietly making preparations to attack.

His surmise was therefore correct, but he cared little for what they might attempt if he could carry out his plan.

And his plan was this:

To start with a boat, as soon as the sun set and before the moon was up, to the Anita, and when within easy distance of her to send out four strong swimmers—whom, as we know, he had already selected—to cut her cables. She had an anchor out fore and aft, and when these were cut away she would drift with the current, which would by that time be setting toward the shore.

The Belvedere, at a given signal, was to twist her sails, and sail out of the harbor, the signal to be the flashing of a lantern from the boat, which was also to be a guide to the swimmers on their return. As soon as they were safe, an exchange of signal lights would give notice of the whereabouts of the Belvedere, and Harry would return on board.

An excellent plan if it could only be carried out.

He knew there were many chances against its success, for the slightest mishap might ruin all. If the enemy had only a notion of his intention it would not be a difficult matter to foil him; the utmost care and precaution was therefore necessary.

The afternoon passed and the night came on—not as it does with us, slowly and by degrees—but suddenly, and, to the inexperienced, almost without warning.

The moment the sun set the boat was lowered, and Harry, with those he had selected and a crew to pull, got in.

"Remember," said our hero to Bill Grunt, "have the sails shaken out in five minutes' time; watch for a double flash from my lantern, then make for the sea."

"Aye, aye, sir," replied Bill Grunt, who, when he was not troubled with Ching-Ching, was the seaman all over.

"Give way, my men."

With oars muffled, they glided through the dark water, and guided by the stars alone, Harry steered for the Anita.

On board, then, all was darkness, and what plans they had on hand were being carried out with the strictest secrecy.

Samson's eyes, like all of his race, were very keen, and he was the first to make out the hull of the ship. As soon as he did so, the boat paused, and those who were intrusted with the dangerous work tossed off

their garments, and, with naught but a keen axe around about the neck, dropped into the water.

"Good fortune attend you," whispered Harry.

"Amen," said Tom.

Then they glided away like shadows into the gloom, and Harry bade the men pull quietly and easily, so as to get to the outside of the Anita.

The stillness was only broken by the sighing of a gentle breeze and the rippling of the water against the sides of the boat. On board all was dark and still, for the word had gone around that there would be rough work that night, and no man burned a light, lest his house should be made a mark of.

The other side of the Anita was reached, and then Harry bade the men rest upon their oars. The great hull of the frigate lay like a dark shadow between him and the Belvedere.

All still.

"To be or not to be," muttered Harry; "perhaps they may fail. Why did I not go myself? And yet, no, I am wanted here to guide them all."

What cry is that? only a sea bird late upon the wing.

But it sufficed for Harry, who flashed his lantern twice, and in three minutes a man clammers over the side of the boat—it was Tom.

"What cheer?" asked Harry.

"Well and neatly done; she is drifting on to the shore rapidly."

Again the sea bird's cry, and Harry shows his lantern boldly. A gun from the drifting Brazilian sends a shot far over him.

"Watching, too," said Harry.

Tom and Samson now came in and Ching-Ching alone remained.

Where was he?

"He helped me to cut my end," said Tom, "and I left him clinging to it as if for a rest."

"I sincerely hope the poor fellow is not drowned," said Harry.

"All right, sar," cried Ching-Ching, as he climbed over, drawing after him something

which looked, in the light of the lantern, like a monstrous eel.

"What have you got there?" asked our hero.

"Only a lilly bit of him cable," replied Ching-Ching. "I cut him through twice, and bring a bit on board—good rope, berry useful."

"At all events," said Harry, clapping him on the shoulder, "it will serve as a relic of this night's bold work, and I will give it a prominent place in my cabin."

"Tank you," replied the gratified Ching-Ching. "Any other genlyman like a lily bit, I go back for it."

"And get your own pigtail cut off?" said Tom True.

"De man dat do dat take my life first," replied Ching-Ching, gravely.

A curious crushing sound, followed by the shouting of many voices, interrupted the speakers, and every eye was turned in the direction of the harbor, from whence the sounds proceeded. All, however, was so dark that they could see nothing.

CHAPTER XI.

THE STORY OF A WRONG.

"She cannot have struck yet," said Harry. "No; besides it was not the sound of a vessel running upon shore."

A thought simultaneously flashed through the minds of several in the boat—what if the Belvedere had run into her? But nobody expressed it in words.

The noise and confusion increased, receiving additional power from the darkness, and the voices of officers giving hasty commands could plainly be heard.

"Something looming hard by," said Tom.

Harry showed his lantern, and promptly there came a light in reply.

"The Belvedere!" cried the occupants of the boat; and regardless of any risk they might run, they gave vent to their feelings in a strong, hearty British shout.

It was responded to by those on board the Belvedere, and answered by the Anita men with a yell of rage.

"Hold on," cried Harry; "we are safe! Stand by for a moment, Grunt."

"All right, sir."

"That's it, now we've got hold. Show a light here."

In a twinkling all were on board, and the boat hauled in.

"What was the matter down there, Grunt?"

"Couldn't quite make out, sir," replied Bill, "but I think she bounced against the entrance to the harbor."

"That's unlucky, for it woke them up too soon," said Harry; "but it matters little. Steer away nor'west by west, and serve out double grog to the men, and treble to Samson and Ching-Ching."

There was no need for him to order anything for Tom or Ira, as they were invited to sup with him below, and then a little later on a very dainty feast was spread.

"Let us drink to the Belvedere," said Harry; "the most gallant craft upon the sea."

"And to the captain, the most gallant sail-or afloat."

"You are disposed to be complimentary to-night."

"I am inclined to be truthful. Your good health, and yours, Ira."

"And yours," said Ira. "Now we have a long night before us, let us make it a merry one."

"Shall I make it an interesting one," asked Harry, "if I tell you a story—the story of my wrong?"

"Of all the things I don't know I should most like to hear."

"And you, Ira?"

"You know my feelings; I have hinted them a hundred times."

"So let it be," said Handsome Harry; "when we have fed, you can settle your wine and cheroots while I tell you as much of my story as I know."

"Agreed."

When the meal was over, old Cutten, who was waiter for the time, cleared the table, put more wine upon it, and went out. Harry threw himself upon an easy lounge in the corner, and the others settled themselves in two American chairs.

"Will you smoke, Harry?" asked Ira.

"No, no; not while I tell such a story as mine."

"I beg your pardon, Harry."

"The story I am about to tell has never passed my lips before," Harry began, "not even to Don Salvo, who has helped me with his purse to pursue the man who owes a debt his life cannot repay. I was born in England, in sweet, sunny Wiltshire, where the grass is greener and the foliage richer than anything I have seen in the wide world. My home, which I left before I was nine years of age, was a large building standing on the slope of the hill, and looking down upon a river which wound about the plains below.

"Only one part of the place was occupied, and the rest was closed up, a sealed and mysterious book to me and my twin-brother Harold, who, with my mother and an old woman for a servant, were the only creatures residing there. My mother was always in mourning, and when we asked her, used to say that father was dead. We had never seen him, and therefore could feel no great grief. One can never feel the loss of that one has never known.

"One thing was quite clear to Harold and myself, young as we were, and that was that we were shunned by all around us. Even the poorer folks gave us a hasty good-day and hurried on; not one of them ever stopped to say more. As for the richer people, they passed us by with head erect, or stared at us as if we were intruders there.

"But neither Harold nor myself cared a fig for this. We loved each other with that mysterious love which comes only with a double birth. People will tell you that it is a fable when you say that the pain of one is the pain of the other, but I tell you it is true; true as the fact that the sun shines and gives us light and life.

"I will not dwell upon this love—for even to think upon it touches chords in my heart which now give no notes but sorrow and anguish—but come to the time when a change occurred in our lives. My mother, who had long been ailing, died.

"I can see her death-bed now, with her beautiful, careworn face turning from Har-

old to myself with a pitying look, and as she smoothed my locks her lips moved in prayer. Presently Ann Davis, the old servant, came in.

"'Davis,' said my mother, 'come in here.'

"The old woman came to her side and bowed her head in weeping.

"'In a few hours,' said my mother, in a husky voice, 'I shall be no more, and you will be left sole guardian of my boys. Take them from hence—to the other end of the world if you can—where they can never hear their miserable story. There rear them in truth and honesty, for they have in their natures the making of noble men. Stay here long enough to bury me, then go.'

"This was her last request. From that time she spoke no more, but held our heads upon her breast until her spirit went back to the God who gave it. The interment, under the management of Ann Davis, took place, and a month later Harold and I, with our faithful attendant, were crossing the sea.

"Boy-like, we soon forgot our troubles in the passing novelties of our new life, and in time we were landed at our destination, the Island of Cuba, where we found a home already prepared. It was a house built upon one of the hills close to the sea, and behind it lay the rich woods and lands. We boys thought it paradise, and the sea was the great charm to me, but Harold loved the land. As a rule we went out together; now upon the deep with the fishermen, now inland to revel in the rich woods and valleys. Sometimes we stayed away from home for a day or two, and Ann, who was alarmed at first, soon grew used to it. So passed the time until we were both eighteen, and then a great and important change took place."

"Wessel coming up astarn, sir," cried Bill Grunt, putting his head into the cabin.

"What's she like?" asked Harry.

"Werry venomous," replied Bill; "but I can't tell zackly what she is, as there's werry little light left."

"The rest of my story must be reserved," said Harry, rising; "come, let us see who the stranger is."

A few moments' careful inspection was sufficient, and closing his glass, he said:

"It is the Anita, coming on with all sail."

CHAPTER XII.

WARY FIGHTING.

The news that the Brazilian man-of-war was in full pursuit brought all hands upon deck, and many an anxious face was turned toward her, for it was impossible to deny the fact that she was more than a match for the Belvedere as far as weight of guns and sailing powers went.

"They owe us a grudge, and they mean to pay it," said Ira Staines.

"He will never rest until he has settled us," said Tom.

"He may rest shortly—at the bottom of the sea," replied Harry, coolly, and gave the word to clear for action.

"I reckon," said Ira Staines, "that he is about as cool a chap as ever I set eyes on, although I come from a cool country, where the coolest men on this ball of earth can be found."

"He will carry us through," said Tom.

"Through where—the bottom of the Belvedere?"

"No, Staines, no; he will carry us through this job, and settle the Brazilian."

"If he does, he's a downright roarer," muttered the Yankee.

The Belvedere was now thoroughly alive, and every man was at his post doing his work with a will. The men could not help making calculations of their own, and according to all reasonable ideas there was nothing left but to have a brief and merry fight and die.

The Brazilian had undoubtedly taken in fresh stores and fresh men, and ought therefore, in competent hands, to be a match for half a dozen Belvederes.

One thing only could be reasonably looked forward to as a saving power for our hero's gallant little craft, and that was the coming night. The darkness might permit our hero to tack, and thereby foil his foe.

He thought of this, and felt fully certain that he could keep well away during daylight; and as there was no moon, escape was not impossible. But he resolved not to attempt it, for he felt annoyed and irritated by the perseverance of the Brazilian, whom he had wronged in no way, in pursuing him thus.

"No, Tom," he said, addressing his friend, with whom he had been discussing the subject, "if we get away, there is no knowing where or when he may turn up again, and I am resolved that no man shall interfere with my work with impunity."

"But—ahem—he is such a big fellow," urged Tom.

"And will on that account give us a little more trouble," said Harry. "We will keep on the same course, but see that every gun is double-shotted."

"At once?"

"At once, Tom. We may not want the guns for hours, but there will be other work to do anon."

"Aye, aye, sir," cried Tom, seaman-fashion.

"You take the command of the larboard, and Staines the starboard guns, and tell the men that I shall by and by exact the strictest silence."

"What on earth is the move?" said Ira; "he's got something into his head. Well, Tom, go to your post; but shake hands, as we may get blown out of the water."

"Not we," cried Tom, gayly. "Hallo! Ching-Ching and Samson, whither bound?"

Ching-Ching and Samson were both fairly "armed to the teeth," and together presented an awe-inspiring spectacle. Tom, after looking them up and down, asked them if they were going into the cutlery business.

"We hope to hab de oppletunity ob disbosin ob some ob dese," replied Samson,

touching the weapons he bore. Ching-Ching smiled sadly.

"Me berry fond ob peace," he said, "but if anybody get my back up, I cut 'bout a lilly bit. I jes' goin' to put myse'f under de purtection ob Massa Harry."

Bowing low, the two supporters of our hero went their way, and Tom, with his eyes brimful of good-nature, crossed over to the larboard side of the vessel.

The Anita was gaining upon them, for in addition to her extra canvas she seemed to be further favored with a fresher breeze. She was, in fact, bringing up a good capful of extra wind with her. On the other hand, the Belvedere was favored with the rapid approach of a heavy bank of cloud, which could not fail to aid the coming night.

"No moon, no stars," said Harry; "we shall have darkness, indeed. You have good eyes, Samson?"

"Berry good, Massa Harry."

"And so have you, I believe, Ching-Ching?"

"My farder—" began Ching-Ching, when Harry cut him short.

"Your father," he said, "is not here, and therefore his eyes could do me no service. Can you see?"

"Berry good, indeed, sar," replied Ching-Ching, and then, unable to avoid some reference to his wonderful parent, he added, "better dan my farder."

Harry turned away to hide a smile. Hot and fiery as he was by nature, it was not in him to quarrel with the quaint follies of Ching-Ching. Samson, however, was about to inquire into the particulars of the eyesight of Ching-Ching senior, when a gun from the Anita resounded across the deep.

"A signal to stop, sir," said Bill Grunt, grinning all over his very nautical face.

"Shoot up a rocket in reply," replied Harry.

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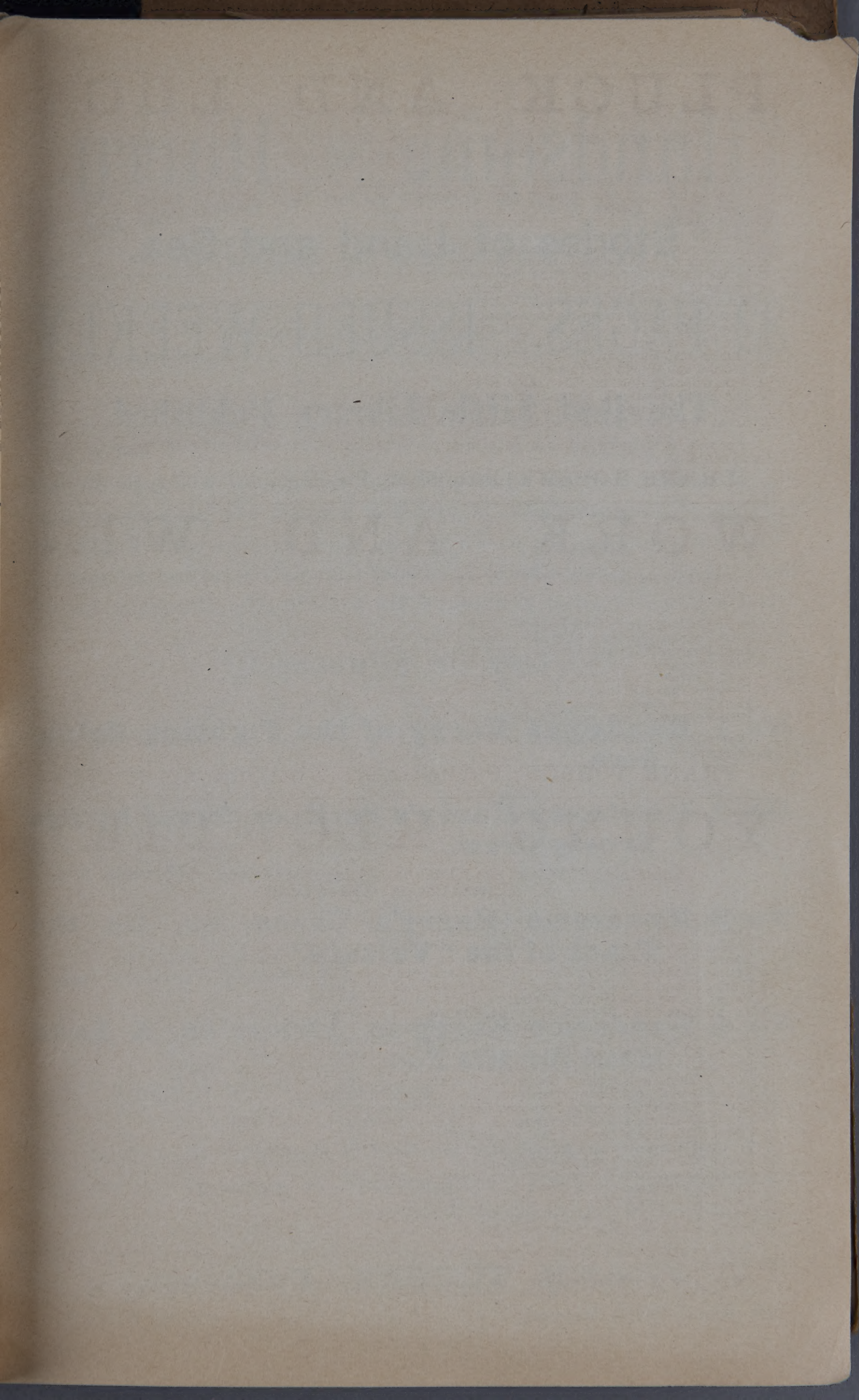
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